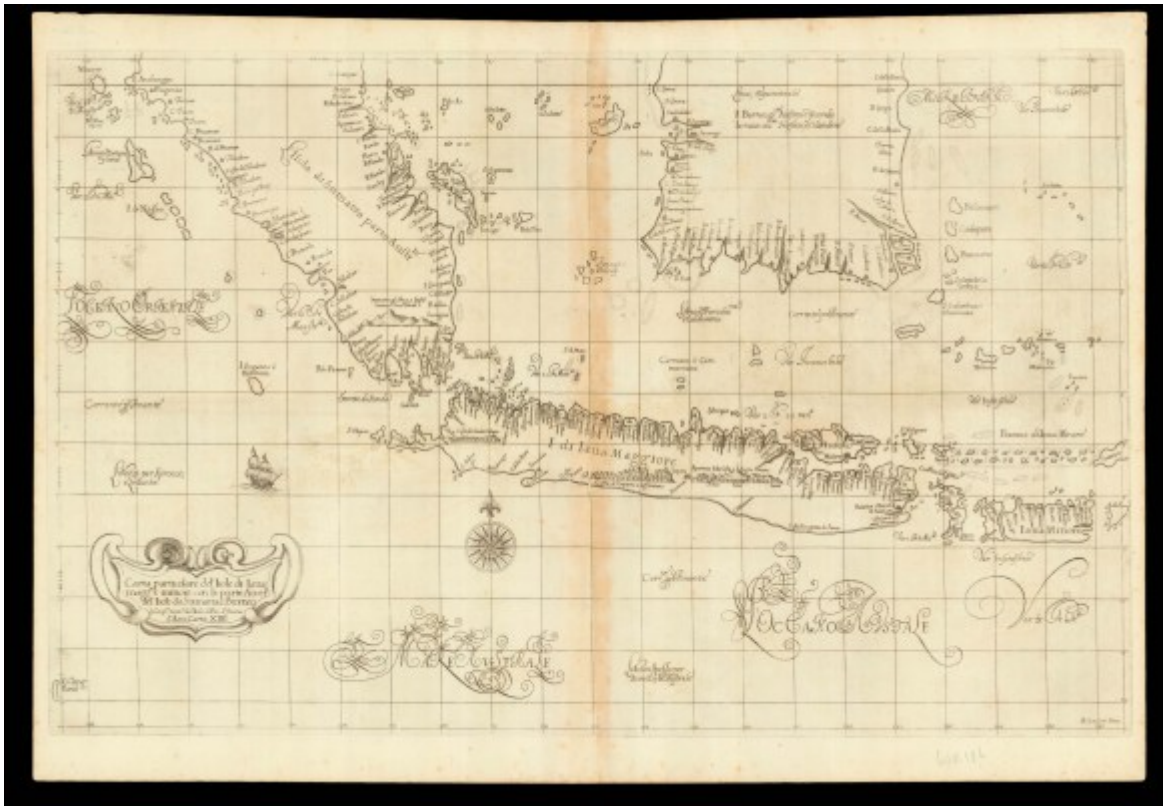


Engraved chart on two joined sheets.

CHART OF THE ISLANDS AT THE HEART OF THE VOC CONTROLLED INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO

Carta particolare del' Isole di Iava magg:re e minore con la parte Austr.le del Isole di Sumatrae e Burneo La Longi.no Comin:ca da l'Isola di Pico d'Asores. d'Asia Carta XIIII.

Author
DUDLEY, Robert

Publication date
1647].

Publisher
Nella Stamperia di Francesco Onofri,

Publication place
[In Firenze,

Physical description
Engraved chart on two joined sheets.

Dimensions
540 by 780mm (21.25 by 30.75 inches).

Notes
This chart of the islands at the heart of the VOC controlled Indonesian archipelago, includes southern Sumatra and southern Borneo, and the entire islands of Java (marked here as Maggiore), Bali, Lombok and Sumbawa (marked here as Java Minore), showing coastal towns, and harbours.

From the first edition of ‘Dell’arcano del mare, di D. Ruberto Dudleo Ducadi Nortumbria e conte di vvarvich, libri sei…’. This is a very early chart, by an Englishman, of the heart of the Dutch empire, and the headquarters of the VOC, since 1619. In his own words, as a young man, Dudley had yearned to travel to “India and other parts to which navigation should take him,… [however, Queen Elizabeth] “would not allow such a mere youth to break his maiden lance in an enterprise requiring so much knowledge of the world, in which many veteran Captains had fared so ill… Not being able to take the desired voyage to China,… [he] sent ships and men there under the command of Captain [Benjamin] Wood” who was ultimately shipwrecked off the Burmese coast.

In spite of Francis Drake’s successful circumnavigation at the end of the 1570s, “English voyages were generally disappointing” (Suarez). The English East India Company was chartered on the last day of 1600, and it was not long before the Company had established factories in Banten (Java), Ayuthaya, and Patani, and was conducting limited trade with Cambodia and Cochin-China. However, the “Massacre of Ambon” and other less tragic difficulties, precipitated the English withdrawal from the Souteast Asian arena, to concentrate on establishing their presence in India instead.

The ‘Arcano del Mare’, one the “greatest atlases of the world” (Wardington), was first published in 1646 when its author, Robert Dudley, was 73, it was not only the first sea atlas of the world, but also the first to use Mercator’s projection; the earliest to show magnetic deviation; the first to show currents and prevailing winds; the first to expound the advantages of ‘Great Circle Sailing’ – the shortest distance between two points on a globe; and “perhaps less importantly the first sea-atlas to be compiled by an Englishman, albeit abroad in Italy” (Wardington).

Robert Dudley (1574-1649) was the son of the Earl of Leicester (the one time favourite of Elizabeth I) and Lady Douglas Sheffield, the widow of Lord Sheffield. Although born out of wedlock, Robert received the education and privileges of a Tudor nobleman. He seems to have been interested in naval matters from an early age, and in 1594, at the age of 21, he led an expedition to the Orinoco River and Guiana. He would later, like all good Tudor seamen, sack Cadiz, an achievement for which he was knighted.

His success upon the high-seas was not matched, unfortunately, by his luck at court, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century he was forced to flee, along with his cousin Elizabeth Southwell, to Europe. Eventually, in 1606, he ended up in Leghorn, Italy, which he set about turning into a great international naval and commercial seaport, in the service of Ferdinand I. Dudley, successful at last, married his cousin, converted to Catholicism, helped Ferdinand wage war against the Mediterranean pirates, by designing and building a new fleet of fighting ships for the Italian navy, served as Grand Chamberlain to three Grand-Duchesses of Tuscany in succession: Maria Maddelena, widow of Cosimo II; then Christina of Lorraine, widow of Ferdinand I; then to Vittoria della Rovere, Princess of Urbino, and wife of Ferdinand II, who created Dudley Duke of Northumberland.

Bibliography

Suarez ‘Early Mapping of Southeast Asia’, pages 205-207

Provenance

Price: £5500

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